

§ 115C-592. Award of scholarship funds for a personal education savings account.

(a) Application Selection. – The Authority shall make available no later than February 1 of each year applications to eligible students for the award of scholarship funds for a personal education savings account to be used for qualifying education expenses to attend a nonpublic school. Information about scholarship funds and the application process shall be made available on the Authority's Web site. Applications shall be submitted electronically. Beginning March 15, the Authority shall begin selecting recipients for scholarships according to the following criteria:

- (1) First priority shall be given to eligible students who were awarded scholarship funds for a PESA during the previous school year if those students have applied by March 1.
- (2) After funds have been awarded to prior recipients as provided in subdivision (1) of this subsection, any remaining funds shall be used to award scholarship funds for a PESA for all other eligible students.

(b) Scholarship Awards. – Scholarships shall be awarded each year for an amount not to exceed nine thousand dollars (\$9,000) per eligible student for the fiscal year in which the application is received, except for eligible part-time students, who shall be awarded scholarships each year for an amount not to exceed four thousand five hundred dollars (\$4,500) per eligible student for the fiscal year in which the application is received. Recipients shall receive scholarship funds deposited in equal amounts to a PESA in each quarter of the fiscal year. The first deposit of funds to a PESA shall be subject to the execution of the parental agreement required by G.S. 115C-595. The parent shall then receive a debit card or an electronic account with the prepaid funds loaded on the card or in the electronic account at the beginning of the fiscal year. After the initial disbursement of funds, each subsequent, quarterly disbursement of funds shall be subject to the submission by the parent of an expense report. The expense report shall be submitted electronically and shall include documentation that the student received an education, as described in G.S. 115C-595(a)(1), for no less than 35 days of the applicable quarter. The debit card or the electronic account shall be renewed upon the receipt of the parental agreement under G.S. 115C-595 for recipients awarded scholarship funds in subsequent fiscal years. Any funds remaining on the card or in the electronic account at the end of the fiscal year may be carried forward to the next fiscal year if the card or electronic account is renewed. Any funds remaining on the card or in the electronic account if an agreement is not renewed shall be returned to the Authority.

(c) Eligibility for the other scholarship programs is provided for as follows:

- (1) An eligible student under this Article may receive, in addition to a PESA, a scholarship under Part 2A of Article 39 of this Chapter.
- (2) An eligible student under this Article may receive, in addition to a PESA and a scholarship under Part 2A of Article 39 of this Chapter, a scholarship under the special education scholarship program for children with disabilities pursuant to Part 1H of Article 9 of this Chapter, only if that student has one or more of the following disabilities:
 - a. Autism.
 - b. Developmental disability.
 - c. Hearing impairment.
 - d. Moderate or severe intellectual disability.
 - e. Multiple, permanent orthopedic impairments.
 - f. Visual impairment.

(d) Applications Not Public Records. – Applications for scholarship funds and personally identifiable information related to eligible students receiving funds shall not be a public record under Chapter 132 of the General Statutes. For the purposes of this section, personally identifiable information means any information directly related to a student or members of a

student's household, including the name, birthdate, address, Social Security number, telephone number, e-mail address, or any other information or identification number that would provide information about a specific student or members of a specific student's household.

(e) Establishment of Initial Eligibility. – An applicant may demonstrate for initial eligibility that the applicant is a child with a disability, as required by G.S. 115C-591(3)c., in either of the following ways:

- (1) The child has been assessed by a local education agency and determined to be a child with a disability and that outcome is verified by the local education agency on a form provided to the Authority.
- (2) The child was initially assessed by a local education agency and determined to be a child with a disability and, following receipt of a scholarship awarded pursuant to Part 1H of Article 9 of this Chapter, was determined to have continuing eligibility, as provided in G.S. 115C-112.6(c)(2), by the assessing psychologist or psychiatrist. Both the initial verification from the local education agency and the continuing verification by the assessing psychologist or psychiatrist shall be provided on a form to the Authority. (2017-57, s. 10A.4(a); 2018-2, s. 6(c); 2018-5, s. 10A.1(f).)